2: Gervis T-S (no date) 1954 AV1 Kashmir AV1

494 master also chose to make the journey this way, he sat facing backwards and had a step fitted on which to place his feet and so save them from dangling. The ekka took about five days to cover the road between Rawalpindi and Srinagar.

The "pleasures" of travel in those days have now gone though. The change came gradually, for after a while it was not unusual to pass a carriage and pair; now it is mostly cars and lorries which make the journey. The tongas, ekkas and bullock wagons are still on the road, but only between villages; even then 'bus services run between these, and lorry "seats" are to be had, either next to the driver—considered almost first class travel —or on top of the load. The driver of these usually expects to make quite a few rupees with these unofficial passengers who sleep, and have not been unknown to roll off from the high load.

491 The route from Rawalpindi to Srinagar is divided up into fourteen stages, not that this interests the traveller by car as it did those who went behind horses. The first stage, a distance of fourteen miles to Barakao, is at an altitude of about seventeen hundred feet above the sea. The road is level, fringed with trees and generally uninteresting to one who has been on the plains. But for the next stage to Tret, the climb is up through low brown foothills; in summer these are sprinkled with burnt-up scrub; the sun, if the day has advanced, can be scorching, the road dusty; in spring, though, it is different, and becomes a sufferable journey. As usual, at a difficult corner a toll bar is come upon. Tret stands elevated four thousand feet above the sea, and here is to be found the first rest house.

361 A further thirteen miles, and just two miles after Sunny Bank, lies Murree, a famous and fashionable hill station spread
● 529 out over the mountains at an altitude of anything between six and seven thousand feet, which have been reached through pine-covered slopes and up many zig-zag roads and hairpin bends. Here is built a modern town, with rest house, hotels, boarding houses, a great sanatorium, a convent, schools, cinemas and churches: it is the hill station for those who live in Rawalpindi, and also for many from Peshawar and Lahore. From here a lovely view can be had of the plains, while in the distance are the glorious snow-covered ranges of mountains, which are amazingly even in their height, few being below

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fourteen thousand feet and none over sixteen thousand; at intervals on the Poonch side great masses stand out from them like bastions, making it difficult to believe that some giant hand had not built this wall.

Murree is a health resort, the place where pallid cheeks gain a pink glow within a few days, the resort which, because of its climate, makes Pakistan tolerable to the long-suffering European who serves there. The air is invigorating, there is usually a coolish breeze, and within a very short while those who have arrived there "just to laze the days away", find themselves suggesting long walks through the wonderfully interesting hills, past babbling brooks, along narrow paths which lead through pink-barked, scented pines, firs and shady trees to some "special spot of our own", probably one such as is often passed on the road-side where the rocks are black wet with water and green with slime, but decorated with masses of dainty, trembling maidenhair ferns which cling to them, growing out from every crack and crevice that will offer them a root hold; they are large leafed, with shining black, wire-like stems.

Those who stay there can sit and cool themselves in contemplation of the far distant snows and admire the beauty of the country lying below their feet and above their heads, with all its differing shades of colours and variety of the shapes of the trees; the smoke-like wisps of cloud which are blown and drawn by air currents up and down the slopes; the intriguing red roof-tops of a hill-station house among the firs and pines, and little gardens of the peasants, which are terraced down spurs of the mountains, and the winding tracks—those you had never realized existed—with the load-carrying coolies striding down with empty baskets on their back, or struggling up with a load, in their hands a T shaped stick on which to rest it when they stand, for the basket or package is carried high on their backs; a head strap across the forehead stops the load from falling back as they climb; once on the ground it would be impossible to lift back unaided.

Kohala, which is the next stage on from Murree, is nearly thirty miles distant. The descent from the hills is steep, and it squats, stuffy and airless, shut in between hills at a height of only eighteen hundred feet above the sea level. In summer it is